



TIPS FOR PUTTING COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP INTO ACTION

1. Be curious and do not “know” the answer or solution ahead of time.

- Do not begin a discussion with fixed pre-formed conclusions or with the end-result in mind. Give the other person the full space to express themselves.
- Do not begin a discussion with an authoritative statement.
- Do not discount any contribution.

2. Listen Politely.

- Be attentive and respectful; convey in your words and actions that you believe the other has something worthy to say.
- Allow the other person the space and time to express their views without premature interruption.
- Offer positive rather than judging comments or questions.
- Attempt to fully hear; listening and hearing are not the same thing.
- Listening positively encourages reciprocity; it encourages the other to listen to us positively.

3. Try to understand the other.

- Genuinely try to understand the other and avoid mis-assumptions.
- Ask questions and paraphrase to check out if you have heard what the other wanted you to hear.

4. Be tentative.

- Model that there are always possible “gray areas.”

- “Here might be one way of looking at the issue.”
- “Are there other ways to understand this?”
- “Help me think through this.”
- “Can we send out a trial balloon?”

5. Use Collective Language.

- Using collective language of “we” is subtle but inclusive; “team” language makes a difference.
- “We” language encourages the bond between us, and it encourages hope and purpose.
- There is great value in sharing stories about what we have accomplished, about how we have faced a challenge together.

6. Develop “Ba.”

- “Ba” is a popular Japanese word/concept. It means an environment, an attitude, a framework where you can hear the other’s ideas; it is not necessary to agree, hearing is not agreeing.

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Dr. Harlene Anderson—organization and leadership consultant, trainer and author—has more than 25 years of experience working with individuals and organizations to creatively solve complex problems and achieve astonishing results never before imagined. She has written extensively on how she conceptualizes and approaches solutions from a collaborative partnership perspective and is a sought out speaker by professional organizations, businesses and universities on collaborative leadership and organizations. She is especially known for her capacity to help others throughout the U.S. and internationally achieve effective leadership skills and to enhance their communication and relationship skills through collaboration.